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Security Council

Fiftieth Year

Provisional

3517th Meeting

Thursday, 13 April 1995, 10.45 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kovanda	(Czech Republic)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cardenas
	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	China	Mr. Li Zhaoxing
	France	Mr. Mérimée
	Germany	Mr. Rudolph
	Honduras	Mr. Martinez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Wibisono
	Italy	Mr. Fulci
	Nigeria	Mr. Gambari
	Oman	Mr. Al-Khussaiby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Sidorov
	Rwanda	Mr. Ubalijoro
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David Hannay
	United States of America	Mrs. Albright

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Tenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1995/279)

95-85290 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Tenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1995/279)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Liberia in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bull (Liberia) took a place at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the tenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, document S/1995/279.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1995/291, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): Italy will vote in favour of the draft resolution on Liberia, since it constitutes a merely technical renewal of the United Nations Observer Mission there. During the present delay in the peace process, legitimate doubts are being raised about the wisdom of maintaining this mission unless the parties demonstrate real goodwill and a real intention to accelerate the reconciliation process.

We agree with the substance of the draft resolution, in particular with regard to the need to hold the summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as soon as possible. We are also in favour of the measures concerning the establishment of a sanctions committee to be entrusted with verifying the application of the arms embargo against Liberia.

We understand that the continued, and continuing, violation of the weapons embargo is one of the major obstacles hindering the efforts of the international community towards the re-establishment of peace in Liberia. Hopefully, this measure will also signal to the countries in the area that the Security Council is serious about the question and, more generally, that they need to really commit themselves to creating the proper conditions for implementing the Akosombo and Accra Agreements.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his most useful report (S/1995/279) of 10 April 1995, the tenth in the series of progress reports on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). We also commend and express appreciation to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for their untiring efforts to bring about peace in Liberia.

From the report, the Indonesian delegation notes that developments towards a resolution of the situation have not been encouraging and that actions unfolding in the country at present are not of the sort to create a climate conducive to the attainment of peace, stability and national reconciliation. The report states that the peace process in Liberia remains at an impasse and, further, that the breakdown of the cease-fire has led to a further deterioration in the overall situation.

This situation has resulted in large part from the failure of the parties to reach agreement amongst themselves on the instalment of a Council of State. We

deeply regret the failure of the factions and of the political parties to reach such an agreement, despite the untiring efforts of the Chairman of ECOWAS and other ECOWAS leaders. What is missing is the political will to implement the Accra Agreement in good faith. It is our sincere hope that the Liberian parties will now strictly adhere to the Accra Agreement, demonstrate their readiness to implement it fully, and make evident their political determination and commitment to achieving peace and stability in Liberia. Furthermore, it is our hope that the follow-up consultations on these matters will result in agreements on the installation of the Council of State.

Another issue of concern to the Indonesian delegation is the question of a sustained extension of humanitarian relief activities to the areas controlled by the factions, which has been impeded by the absence of credible security guarantees from the factions in Liberia. We believe that sustained security guarantees will ensure that sufficient quantities of life-saving assistance reach the civilian population throughout the country. It is in this context that we would like to express our hope that the ECOWAS summit can take place as soon as possible in order to coordinate and harmonize policies on Liberia and promote the implementation of the Accra Agreement. In this regard, we cannot fail to pay tribute to the Government of Nigeria for agreeing to host the ECOWAS summit meeting.

The draft resolution on Liberia before us today, which, *inter alia*, extends the mandate of UNOMIL until 30 June 1995 and establishes a Committee of the Security Council to monitor the effective implementation of the arms embargo imposed under resolution 788 (1992), enjoys my delegation's support, and we will vote in favour of its adoption.

The extension of the mandate ought to be seen as an opportunity for the parties to the conflict to respect the cease-fire and implement all the relevant agreements, and as providing sufficient time to prepare and convene the ECOWAS summit. It is our hope that, within this period, the Liberian parties will be afforded a significant opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to resolve their own problems and to respect the role of international, regional, and subregional organizations.

Mr. Uhomoibhi (Nigeria): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his latest report on the situation in Liberia (S/1995/279), which constitutes the basis of the draft resolution now before the Council. To a large extent, the report gives an accurate account of the current state of play in Liberia, which, unfortunately, is not encouraging. It underscores the political, military and humanitarian tragedy that continues to plague Liberia.

My delegation has expressed at every opportunity its disappointment over the fact that the Liberian factions and political leaders have not been able to agree on the composition and chairmanship of the new Council of State, as provided for in the Agreement they themselves signed in Accra, Ghana, on 21 December 1994, despite the considerable efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to broker an agreement between the Liberian parties.

In Nigeria's continuing efforts to help resolve the deadlock in the Liberian peace process, my Government has agreed to host a summit of West African leaders in Abuja in May. It is hoped that this summit will result in a more effective harmonization of the policies of the States in the subregion and produce a concertation of efforts to assist the Liberian parties in achieving peace and national reconciliation in their country.

However, our efforts can only complement those of the parties themselves. If we are able to create a climate conducive for negotiations, it is for the parties to seize the moment and make the necessary compromises for peace. My delegation is in full agreement with the Secretary-General when he observes in his report that:

> "The continuing rivalry and intransigence of the faction and political leaders have taken a heavy toll on the Liberian people". (*S/1995/279, para. 28*)

It is only proper that those responsible for the continuing impasse in the Liberian peace process reflect seriously on the personal responsibility they bear for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of their people, the destruction of their country's economy and infrastructure and the destabilizing effects on their neighbours, the most pertinent case being Sierra Leone.

The present draft resolution is right in extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 30 June 1995, as recommended by the Secretary-General. It is also appropriate to call on all Liberian parties once again to implement the Akosombo and Accra Agreements by re-establishing an effective cease-fire and installing the Council of State.

Violations of the arms embargo imposed under resolution 788 (1992) have in the past not helped the collective efforts to promote peace in Liberia. Therefore,

my delegation supports any well-thought-out measures aimed at tightening the current regime limiting the flow of arms into the country. In this connection, we endorse paragraph 3bis of the draft resolution, which does exactly that, and establishes a Committee of the Security Council to monitor compliance with the arms embargo regime, and we hope this will have a salutary effect on the situation.

For these reasons, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Martinez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the report on Liberia submitted by the Secretary-General in document S/1995/279 pursuant to paragraph 2 of Security Council resolution 972 (1995). Having read the report, my delegation can only deplore the serious situation prevailing in the country as a result of the intransigence of the factions now fighting for power and their failure to meet the commitments undertaken in the Accra and Akosombo Agreements.

The Secretary-General's report allows us to understand the gravity of the situation, which can be summed up as follows. The parties have failed to reach an agreement to install a Council of State, a fundamental step towards the implementation of the Accra Agreement. Hostilities between the parties to the conflict have intensified, leading in turn to an increase in the number of refugees and displaced persons. There have been reports of massacres, which are currently under investigation. Tanzania and Uganda have decided to withdraw their contingents from the peace force in Liberia, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The humanitarian situation has deteriorated dramatically, to the extent that the supply of food to the camps for refugees and displaced persons is in serious danger. This and other negative factors must be overcome if peace is to prevail in Liberia.

The Secretary-General, in paragraph 22 of his report, states that the peace process remains at an impasse. Military activities have intensified and the parties have failed to implement one of the basic steps of the Accra Agreement. Nevertheless, one positive element - which my delegation considers to be very important - is the summit that is soon to be hosted by Nigeria for States members of the Economic Community of West African States. For its part, my delegation appreciates Nigeria's efforts to promote peace in Liberia.

The draft resolution before us today marks another effort on the part of the Council to secure a just solution and lasting peace in Liberia. This will be possible only if the factions in conflict decide to cooperate to achieve it. The draft resolution also establishes a committee to monitor the arms embargo imposed under resolution 788 (1992), and my delegation hopes that this will contribute decisively to the peace process in Liberia.

Lastly, we believe that if the factions in Liberia do not wake up to this opportunity and seize it, the Council should seriously reconsider its role in that country, since resources and efforts are being exhausted with no results to justify the United Nations presence in Liberia.

My delegation supports the draft resolution in all respects.

Mr. Li Zhaoxing (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation has always closely followed the development of the situation in Liberia. We have expressed our deep concern at the stagnation in the peace process, the breakdown of the cease-fire, the large quantity of weapons flowing to the country and the frustration of humanitarian relief activities there.

The key to progress in the Liberian peace process lies in the good-faith implementation of the Akosombo and Accra Agreements by all parties to the conflict. They must immediately implement an effective cease-fire and establish a Council of State as soon as possible so as to lay a solid foundation for achieving national reconciliation.

We endorse and support the convening of a regional summit meeting aimed at finding an appropriate settlement to the question of Liberia. In this regard, we wish to express our gratitude to the Government of Nigeria and to President Rawlings of Ghana for their efforts.

The draft resolution before us reflects the spirit of the Liberian people and conforms to their fundamental interests. It is also a reflection of the ardent hopes of the international community. The Chinese delegation will therefore vote in favour.

The President: I shall now put draft resolution S/1995/291 to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Botswana, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, Oman, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 985 (1995).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): The United States is deeply concerned about the absence of progress towards peace in Liberia. The cease-fire begun on December 28 has largely broken down. There are new reports of massacres and atrocities against civilians and new movements of displaced persons towards Buchanan and across the Ghanaian and Ivoirian borders.

Primary responsibility for the continued bloodshed lies with the armed factions that have proved unwilling thus far to implement the Akosombo and Accra Agreements. We strongly urge that the cease-fire be restored promptly, and that the factions act quickly to resolve their differences over the Council of State and to implement the accords.

The United States continues to support fully the efforts of the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, President Rawlings of Ghana, to bring about a summit meeting of the concerned States in the region, together with the faction leaders. This meeting is now scheduled for 17 May in Abuja, Nigeria. We strongly urge all invited Heads of State to attend the summit in the interest of harmonizing their policies on Liberia, and particularly to halt the flow of arms into Liberia, thereby facilitating an end to the war.

The United States believes that the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) has a key role to play in monitoring implementation of the peace process and protecting civilians from the fighting. Unfortunately, it has been unable thus far to carry out its mandate because of continuing hostilities. The United States supports this limited extension of the UNOMIL mandate in the hope that the regional summit meeting on 17 May will give real impetus to peace. We must say, however, that technical roll-overs are not a solution and that the patience of the international community is not endless.

Mr. Rudolph (Germany): Germany voted in favour of the resolution, which extends the mandate of UNOMIL until 30 June. The situation on the ground and the progress in the peace process do not necessarily justify extending UNOMIL's mandate. In fact, the situation has deteriorated: there is still no agreement on the composition of the Council of State, and the cease-fire has broken down.

Nevertheless, we believe that the Council must give the scheduled summit meeting of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to be held in Abuja under the auspices of the Government of Nigeria, the chance to achieve the much-needed positive breakthrough for war-stricken Liberia. In this context, we would like to reiterate our support for the efforts of ECOWAS and its Military Monitoring Group in assisting the peace process in Liberia.

The ECOWAS summit will be of extreme importance, and we urge all parties concerned to attend it and to work together, in a spirit of goodwill and compromise, to find a way out of the tragic impasse that has characterized the situation in Liberia for so long.

The factions in Liberia must realize that they bear the responsibility for reaching a lasting settlement to the crisis in their country. We therefore urge them to respect the cease-fire and to implement the other provisions of the Accra Agreement. In the absence of real progress, it will be increasingly difficult for the international community to continue to assist Liberia.

The Council will therefore have to examine very carefully the future of the United Nations presence in Liberia when the current mandate expires at the end of June.

Mr. Mérimée (France) (*interpretation from French*): Our Council has just unanimously adopted resolution 985 extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to 30 June 1995. Through approving the resolution, France wishes to express its desire to see the implementation of the peace process in Liberia which should have been assured with the signing of the Akosombo, Cotonou and Accra Agreements by all the Liberian parties. By extending UNOMIL's presence in Liberia for a limited

period, France also intends to send a clear message to the parties.

At the urging of the international community and with the assistance of the countries of ECOWAS, whose Chairman has been tireless in this regard, the Liberian factions have long been called upon to work towards national reconciliation, which alone can guarantee lasting peace in the country. However, recent events have shown that the factions have not been resolutely committed to that course of action: the cease-fire is being more honoured in the breach than in the observance, human rights violations seem common and no real progress has been accomplished in installing the institutions provided for by the Agreements I mentioned.

In this context, the meeting organized on the initiative of the Chairman of ECOWAS, which is due to take place next month in Abuja, seems in many respects to represent a last chance. My delegation fervently hopes that the Liberians will put the national interest first and finally commit themselves, with good faith and a sense of continuity, to the peace process.

Thus, the Council's decision to extend UNOMIL's mandate today both sends an invitation and sounds a warning: it tells the parties that it is not too late to show genuine resolve to restore lasting peace to Liberia, but it also makes clear that it will soon be impossible for the international community to continue to assist Liberia if Liberians themselves refuse to come to an understanding.

Mr. Sidorov (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: The Russian Federation is seriously concerned by the complex situation in Liberia and by the prospect that the country will slip into the abyss of chaos and civil war, so threatening the civilian population with new disasters without number and the region with further destabilization. We note with regret that, almost four months after the signing of the Accra Agreement, the Liberian parties have basically implemented not one of its fundamental provisions and have failed to resolve the most urgent problem, that of establishing a Council of State. As a result of this most irresponsible approach to the fate of their country and its people on the part of the leaders of the armed groups, the peace process in Liberia remains deadlocked: the cease-fire has been broken, and an increase in hostilities has been reported, accompanied by human rights violations on a massive scale.

The Russian delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution just adopted because, firstly, it gives the Liberian parties a clear signal that the international community is prepared to continue to render assistance in settling the conflict while also containing a clear warning that the outcome the next time the Council considers the future role of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia will hinge mainly on how far the Liberians themselves succeed in making progress towards re-establishing the peace process before the Mission's mandate expires on 30 June.

We believe that this is one of the last — if not the last — real chances for a peaceful settlement to the crisis in Liberia, and it must not be missed. We hope that the forthcoming ECOWAS summit meeting will play an important and constructive role in resolving the protracted conflict in Liberia, and in re-establishing the peace process. We believe that the decision in the resolution to establish a Security Council Committee to monitor compliance with the embargo imposed under Security Council resolution 788 (1992) will really help normalize the situation not only in Liberia but in the region as a whole. In this connection, we urgently call on all States, especially Liberia's neighbours, to help improve the effectiveness of the embargo on weapons supplies to Liberia, and to cooperate fully with the Committee.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): The resolution the Security Council has just adopted is of fundamental importance to the peace process in Liberia and to the Liberian people, who have lost control of their country to the rule of the gun. The extension of UNOMIL's mandate to 30 June 1995 is possibly Liberia's last chance. It is our sincere hope that the factions and political leaders there will understand the message very clearly.

My delegation wholeheartedly welcomes the efforts of Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States in the search for peace in Liberia. We hope that the summit meeting planned for 10 May 1995 will be successful in bringing peace to that ravaged country. We shudder to imagine what will happen to Liberia if the various factions once again fail to cooperate.

The President: I call on the representative of Liberia.

Mr. Bull (Liberia): Mr. President, I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. Your vast experience

and diplomatic skills assure us that the Council's deliberations will proceed smoothly and successfully. I also wish to commend Ambassador Li Zhaoxing of the People's Republic of China for the able manner in which he conducted the work of the Council during March.

My delegation expresses its profound gratitude to the Secretary-General for the interest which he continues to manifest in the Liberian conflict. We remain hopeful that the noble objective of finding a peaceful resolution of the conflict will soon be realized. The Secretary-General's reports of 24 February 1995 (S/1995/158) and 10 April 1995 (S/1995/279) accurately assess the prevailing situation in Liberia and do offer alternative courses of action that should assist the Council in determining the measures it should take to end the fratricidal conflict in my country.

Since the eruption of the civil war more than five years ago, it has been our solemn duty to represent, before this body, the sentiments, hopes and aspirations of our compatriots. On those occasions, we sought to convey their anguish, frustration and outrage at the losses of innocent lives, which now exceed 300,000, and at the fact that over a million of our citizens have been forced to flee to neighbouring countries as refugees.

During this period of national distress, the Liberian people have appealed for and received assistance from the international community, for which we are indeed most grateful. In this regard, they have been and continue to be appreciative of the peace-keeping initiative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the one hand and the humanitarian relief assistance of the United Nations and governmental and non-governmental organizations on the other. Moreover, the United Nations has lent its moral authority to several peace initiatives undertaken by ECOWAS, thus giving concrete meaning to Chapter VIII of the Charter, which encourages cooperation with regional bodies in the pacific settlement of disputes.

The efforts of the United Nations and ECOWAS are underpinned by the fact that a large majority of Liberians have made known their preference for democratic institutions and the rule of law, in opposition to the coercive use of military force to achieve political power. Sadly, this legitimate aspiration has been lost on the factions in Liberia, which seem bent on acquiring power by force of arms. To date, they have reneged on every agreement signed, and have instead continued to subject the people of Liberia to acts of terrorism and violence.

This sad state of affairs is a major impediment to the demobilization and disarmament of combatants. We are now left with the question of what is responsible for the impasse, and what kind of pressure can be brought to bear that will induce the factions to forgo their intransigent and belligerent stance and seek political accommodation. Time and again, concessions were made taking into consideration the specific concerns of particular factions. Unfortunately, this approach has served only to embolden them to make new demands.

In this connection, it is clear that, until all forms of support to these factions are curtailed, they will not honour the agreements to which they are signatories. We therefore welcome and support the proposed ECOWAS summit — which will, *inter alia*, address this issue — and we are certainly most grateful to the Security Council for the resolution, which contains elements that will help to ensure that the arms embargo is respected.

It is the prevailing view that the forthcoming summit of ECOWAS will offer the last, best hope for the Liberian parties to reach political accommodation and fully implement the terms of the previous agreements, including a cease-fire and installation of the Council of State. Furthermore, if the parties fail to avail themselves of this opportunity, the goodwill and support of the international community will be eroded.

While we Liberians realize that this Organization, indeed Member States, cannot continue to utilize scarce resources to assist parties which are unwilling to resolve their differences peacefully, it should be borne in mind that the majority of Liberians desire to live in peace: it is the armed factions which continue to hold the people hostage. In such a case, should a defenceless people be abandoned because of the unscrupulous acts of a few? We strongly believe that, in this post-cold-war era, the Organization has a moral obligation, and should consider bold and imaginative measures to address these and other relevant problems resulting from internal conflicts in Member States.

We the Liberian people have suffered long enough and yearn for normal life in our country. As before, we can only appeal to the international community not to leave us before a resolution of the conflict. The United Nations has shown much courage and persistence in other conflicts, and we wish it do so and believe that it can exert a similar effort in Liberia.

The President: I thank the representative of Liberia for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.